



Citizens group advising on freeway decides to expand membership

Kerry Fehr-Snyder
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A citizens group recommending whether to build the proposed South Mountain Freeway now has a bigger hurdle to clear to make decisions.

The South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team decided last week to invite up to 10 new members, bringing its total to 30.

The SMCAT needs at least 16 members to vote on issues at each meeting to make a quorum if all the invited members join.

"The possibility to reduce it (the quorum requirement) is there," said Chad Blostone, a SMCAT member representing the Foothills Homeowners Association in Ahwatukee. "We'd need a quorum, of course, so the potential for a Catch-22 is there."

Sandy Bahr, another SMCAT member and conservation outreach director for the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club, agreed Thursday to expand the group despite the potential quorum problem.

"My view on the quorum is if you're going to say that you're representative of the community, then you really need a quorum," she said.

The committee will recommend whether to build the 22-mile freeway along Pecos Road. The final decision lies with the Federal Highway Administration. The Maricopa Association of Governments will decide whether to fund its construction.

The previous SMCAT recommended a west-side alignment for the freeway that freeway planners rejected over the "preferred alignment" of 55th Avenue.

The SMCAT will meet Aug. 23 at a site to be determined. Because the group stretches from the Southeast Valley to Southwest Valley, it has struggled to agree on a venue.

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Isn't Chad Blostone, a SMCAT member representing the Foothills Homeowners Association in Ahwatukee one of the members responsible for destroying that park in Ahwatukee by burying it under 30 feet of gravel without notifying anyone in the community?

This version of SMCAT seems to have Ahwatukee's best interests at heart.(**Sam1222**, June 13, 2007 07:22AM)

They could invite 1000 more members but it wouldn't matter. This process is a farce made possible by ADOT & MAG to obtain hundreds of millions of dollars of federal financial aid.

ADOT and MAG will not accept any decision this group makes.

ADOT and MAG are socialist entities. Democracy isn't a part of their modus operandi.(**Sam1222**, June 13, 2007 07:15AM)

The more the marrier. Let's not screw up landscape that cannot be repaired for the sake of a short-term fix to traffic congestion. (**OggieDog**, June 12, 2007 03:21PM)
